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BOOKS OF MEDIEVAL AND MODERN EUROPEAN HISTORY

English Field Systems. By HOWARD LEVI GRAY, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of History, Harvard University. [Harvard Historical Studies, vol. XXII.] (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press. 1915. Pp. ix, 568.)

Not every scholar is competent to deal with the complex and difficult materials from which the history of English agriculture must be written. The appearance of a work like Professor Gray's is an event, and his careful study is a notable contribution. Its scope is defined by the effort to solve the problem of the racial element in manorial origins, which was so forcibly presented a generation ago by Seebohm. The chief interest of the general reader in the book will arise from the fact that it is the first thoroughgoing attempt to deal with this problem; but it is important for other reasons. An original study of Celtic land systems provides information concerning a phase of the subject heretofore inadequately handled. Incidentally it appears that the subdivision of arable in the manner known as runrig is not an essential of the Celtic plan. Moreover the body of material gathered by much patient research is treated from the territorial point of view, and some older fallacies accordingly are exposed. Thus the three-field system is seen not to have prevailed throughout England, as has often been assumed. Even the famous Hitchin fields are not typical of the county in which they lie. Another noteworthy feature of the work is the attention given to the neglected two-field system. The existence of this is attested as early as the tenth century, before the three-field system is specifically described. The distribution of the two is shown to forbid acceptance of the theory that they arose through different tribal or racial influences. The explanation of their relationship is that three-course tillage arose as an improvement in agricultural method in regions where quality of soil permitted the increased demand upon it which was the object of the change.

The great result of the investigation is the conclusion that three distinct types of field prevailed in as many parts of England. The author's researches enable him to map these areas. The plan by which peasant holdings of arable were distributed with some approach to evenness in two or three fields prevailed in the great region reaching from the Channel as far north as Durham and from Cambridgeshire as far west as Wales. In a second territorial division, which comprised, generally speaking, the counties of the southwest as well as those of the northwest and north, the open fields as might be expected bear marked traits of the Celtic system. The remainder of England, including Kent, East Anglia, and the counties of the lower Thames basin, shows field systems variable but different from those found elsewhere. These the writer conjectures grew out of the usage of Kent where the *iugum* formed a peculiar unit of villein tenure. The two- and three-field

system is claimed as Germanic in origin on the ground of its prevalence to the east and south of the Weser; the Kentish system, on the other hand, is held to bear traces of Roman origin. The conclusions based upon these findings are modestly stated. The author fully recognizes the gulf of seven centuries which separates the Germanic conquest of Britain from the earliest period of satisfactory records. Yet he is entitled to make deductions where earlier writers have hazarded them from far less complete data. The evidence of land systems, so he states, implies that Roman influence was longest felt in southeastern England where there was probably a considerable survival of Celtic serfs. In the great area of the two-field and three-field system Germanic conquest was of a thoroughgoing nature. In the district where Celtic agrarian usage was retained the process of subjugation is known to have been slow and difficult. Such is the trend of the latest expert opinion based upon the tracing of our most promising clue to the character and conditions of the Anglo-Saxon conquest.

W. A. MORRIS.

A History of Mediaeval Political Theory in the West. By Sir R. W. CARLYLE, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., and A. J. CARLYLE, M.A., D.Litt., Lecturer in Politics and Economics, University College, Oxford. Volume III. *Political Theory from the Tenth Century to the Thirteenth.* By A. J. CARLYLE. (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons. 1915. Pp. xvii, 201.)

THIS is the third volume of a work the first two of which have already been reviewed in this journal (X. 629; XV. 836). The first volume dealt with political theories from the second century to the ninth, the second with those of the Roman lawyers and canonists, and the third was to have dealt with political theory from the tenth to the thirteenth century. The authors concluded, however (p. 17), "that the adequate treatment of the subjects has required so much space that we have decided to deal with feudalism and the general political ideas in this volume, and with the relations of the temporal and spiritual powers in the next".

So the present volume is devoted to a treatment of "the influence of feudalism on political theory" in which such subjects as personal loyalty, justice and law, source and maintenance of law, are taken up, and to "political theory in the eleventh and twelfth centuries", under which natural law and equality, the divine nature and moral function of political authority, divine right, justice and law, the social contract and universal empire are considered.

In the part on feudalism the author combats the only too prevalent notion drawn mostly from the abuses of feudal survivals of the times of Louis XIV. and the absolute monarchs. "There is still a vulgar impression that in the Middle Ages men looked upon authority as irre-